

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

STATE CAPITOL
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E-MAIL
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California State Senate



**SENATOR
S. JOSEPH SIMITIAN**

DISTRICT OFFICE
160 Town & Country Village
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(650) 688-6384
Fax (650) 688-6370

SATELLITE OFFICE
701 Ocean Street, Room 318A
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 425-0401
Fax (831) 425-5124

January 14, 2010

Laura Thompson
Project Manager, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties
San Francisco Bay Trail Project
c/o Association of Bay Area Governments
P.O. Box 2050, Oakland, CA 94604-2050

Dear Ms. Thompson:

I am writing to express my support for the grant application submitted by the City of East Palo Alto for a new trails project at Cooley Landing Park. Residents of East Palo Alto do not have direct access to San Francisco Bay. This project would provide that much-needed access and, along with it, numerous environmental benefits.

The new trails at Cooley Landing will facilitate bicycling and walking in East Palo Alto, a community with a number of lower-income residents with less access to healthy recreation activities and mobility choices than other Bay Area residents. The trails project will also help cap a nine-acre contaminated site that is currently exposing area residents and the waters of San Francisco Bay to contaminated dust and runoff.

Family recreation and education opportunities on the new trails will help visitors learn more about the natural features that define their landscape and region and nurture an ethic of environmental stewardship in a new generation. Along with installed interpretive signs, many organizations have offered to host education programs at Cooley Landing: the Audubon Society – Santa Clara Valley Chapter, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Don Edwards San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge, Collective Roots, Save the Bay, and Acterra.

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

I hope that you will give this grant application every consideration. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



S. Joseph Simitian
State Senator, Eleventh District

Exhibit 4: Project Letters

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0021
(916) 319-2021
FAX (916) 319-2121

Assembly
California Legislature

RICHARD S. GORDON
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, TWENTY-FIRST DISTRICT



January 7, 2011

Laura Thompson
Project Manager, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties
San Francisco Bay Trail Project
c/o Association of Bay Area Governments
P.O. Box 2050, Oakland, CA 94604

Dear Ms. Thompson,

I write in support of East Palo Alto's Cooley Landing Park project. This project presents an exceptional opportunity to increase access to much needed recreational space to a community facing serious health and recreation challenges.

Currently, 49% of 5th grade students and 43% of 7th grade students are overweight or obese in the Ravenswood City School District serving East Palo Alto and Menlo Park. Only 7% of students meet all state fitness standards. A Youth United for Community Action (YUCA) door-to-door survey found that 26% of East Palo Alto children have asthma. The outdoor exercise opportunities that will be present at Cooley Landing Park will offer new chances for improvement of local children's health. The park's connection to the San Francisco Bay Trail system will promote hiking and biking to communities that currently have limited access to these activities.

The funding of trails at Cooley Landing Park will help community members appreciate the beauty and wonder of the San Francisco Bay. In addition, the park would bring much needed attention to East Palo Alto's history and connection with the Bay. The park presents a tremendous opportunity for residents to learn the history and science of one of our state's most precious resources through planned community education classes and events. Furthermore, Cooley Landing Park will attract residents from a diverse collection of towns to interact more closely through integration of the San Francisco Bay Trail system.

Please consider funding this worthy project. Please contact me or Joey Vaughan on my staff at 650-691-2121 if you would like to discuss this project further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard S. Gordon".

Richard S. Gordon
Assemblyman, Twenty-First District

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Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

GENERAL MANAGER
Stephen E. Abbors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Pete Siemens
Mary Davey
Jed Cyr
Curt Riffle
Nonette Hanko
Larry Hassett
Cecily Harris

October 15, 2010

Re: Cooley Landing Park Project, City of East Palo Alto

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to encourage funding for the Cooley Landing project, which is a proposed public park located at the end of Bay Road in East Palo Alto. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) owns portions of Cooley Landing and has signed a 30-year lease agreement with the City of East Palo Alto to develop a park at the site. The District, a public agency under the California Public Resources Code, was formed in 1972 to acquire, restore, protect, and preserve, in perpetuity, a regional greenbelt of open space land, and to provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. We are excited to be working in a partnership with the City of East Palo Alto to implement the Cooley Landing project with the common goal of restoring habitat and providing environmental education opportunities for an underserved community.

Consistent with its Mission the District has acquired numerous parcels adjacent to Cooley Landing beginning in 1980, forming what is now the 373-acre Ravenswood Open Space Preserve (Preserve). The Preserve is comprised of two noncontiguous areas located south of the Dumbarton Bridge and adjacent to San Francisco Bay. Although the Preserve has significant habitat resources and values and is nearby an urban population, the current small trail system and interpretive programs do not attract many participants. The Cooley Landing portion, which is most directly accessible to the public, has remained too contaminated to open to the public for decades. The Cooley Landing project offers many attractive opportunities to significantly increase community understanding of the ecological importance of the Preserve and surrounding natural areas, and to promote its long-term stewardship.

The Cooley Landing project is consistent with the District's Mission. We have created an Ad Hoc Committee of the Board of Directors to guide staff in bringing the Cooley Landing project forward, identified this project a key project with high priority in our annual Action Plan, provided significant technical assistance, and finalized a partnership agreement with the City to facilitate holistic planning, design and development of the site. As part of our technical assistance, we have assigned an experienced planner to collaborate in the process, participated in selection of the design team and in the community workshops, and our biologists have helped with survey work and the design of various habitat restoration features. In addition, our environmental education expert has contributed input into the preliminary design and development of interpretive theme and topics.

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The District Board of Directors voted unanimously on July 14, 2010, to give enthusiastic support to the *Cooley Landing Vision Plan*. The District has also committed \$25,000 to refine the project's Initial Study, which is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It has already contributed \$55,000 in in-kind staff resources to the Cooley Landing project.


The District's expertise in bringing youth to the outdoors could help inform the development of similar programs at Cooley Landing. In addition, over 500 District volunteers commit thousands of hours each year on education, operation, maintenance, monitoring, and other tasks. The District employs a full-time Volunteer Programs Coordinator and a full-time Docent Programs Coordinator, and provides 10-week training sessions for outdoor activity leaders, 6-week training sessions for outdoor education leaders, and 2-day training sessions for Nature Center Hosts. The District's docents lead 20 to 30 monthly free interpretive activities annually. Docents occasionally lead activities at the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, adjacent to Cooley Landing, and would benefit from site improvements to enhance interpretive opportunities.

The District also runs a nature center that is staffed mainly by trained volunteers. Pamela Reliford, the City of East Palo Alto's Recreation Services Supervisor, has served since 2007 as a volunteer staff host of the Daniels Nature Center and as an Outdoor Activity Docent. Opened to the public in 1996, the David C. Daniels Nature Center features a larger-than-life pond creature mobile; a mural depicting pond-dwellers and their food chains; a live, captive-bred gopher snake; and touchable wildlife skulls and skins. The Center offers a "Spaces & Species: Exploring Natural Communities" program for 3rd to 5th graders.

The District also supports Deer Hollow Farm, a working homestead and educational center located at Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve. The City of Mountain View operates and manages the Farm programs, in which visitors, school classes, and community groups can observe and participate in a working farm. Visitors can also take self-guided tours. Every year, over 5,000 students participate in the Deer Hollow Farm school year and summer camp programs.

The District will continue to give technical assistance and support to the City on project design and in the development of a future training program for Cooley Landing docents and the development of volunteer service learning projects. We will continue to work in close partnership with the City to implement this important project. Please feel free to contact the District's project manager, Tina Hugg, (650-691-1200 or thugg@openspace.org) with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Stephen E. Abbors
General Manager

Cc: Lily Lee, City of East Palo Alto
Tina Hugg, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

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JOB TRAINING THAT WORKS

FORMERLY OICW

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Sobrato Companies
John Volckmann
Chairman & Founder
J. Volckmann & Associates, Inc.

Executive Director:

Sharon A. Williams

October 15, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Cooley Landing project offers a tremendous opportunity to increase severely limited open space access to a community facing serious challenges. Please consider funding this important effort.

JobTrain, formerly OICW, is an educational and training institution that also offers career counseling and job placement services to our graduates. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit (Federal Tax ID #: 94-1712371), we help our clients launch new careers and break out of the community's existing cycle of poverty, low education levels, homelessness, drugs, crime, and prison. Through each student's personal and professional growth, JobTrain is creating a new and positive model for other members of the community.

Three programs have already contributed to the Cooley Landing development process and have the potential to collaborate more as the project is implemented:

- **SASSY (School After School for Successful Youth)**
Founded in 1986, SASSY is an accredited after-school vocational training program for students from the Ravenswood City School District (RCSD), Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD) and the Palo Alto Unified School District. Students who complete SASSY classes may earn up to 10 academic credits each semester for participating in the program.
- **Project Build**
The course offers an introduction to construction and environmental training. Students are trained in building trades, hazardous waste removal, asbestos removal and lead removal, and acquire basic construction skills and construction math geared toward apprenticeships. Graduates begin careers as carpenters, ironworkers, electricians, plumbers, drywall workers, and other laborers occupations.
- **Solar Training Program**
This 2-part course provides an introduction to grid-tied photovoltaic electrical systems and teaches students construction skills as they relate to PV installation. Students also learn about different roof types, the history of solar and PV, the basics of electricity, and PV and Electrical Trade Practices. Part 2 of the course provides a hands-on application of the lessons learned in part 1 of the course. Students graduate prepared to be residential Photovoltaic Installer in the Bay Area.



Exhibit 4: Project Letters



JOB TRAINING THAT WORKS

FORMERLY OICW

Job Train has already supported the Cooley Landing restoration and environmental education efforts through these practical contributions:

- Kalamu Chache, In School Youth Coordinator, has participated in a Cooley Landing Resource Group session to help develop the interpretive messages for future interpretation at Cooley Landing. She has also invited the Cooley Landing project manager to present at her after-school youth program and solicit youth input on the design. She offered class credit to students who attended a planning workshop. She has also offered to host poetry workshops and poetry slams at Cooley Landing, especially for youth.
- JobTrain has posted announcements of Cooley Landing planning community meetings at its entryway accessible to all students.
- Tom Huggett, recent Instructor of the Solar Training Program, has already visited Cooley Landing to provide technical assistance to scope the feasibility of installing solar power at the site. He has also sent many of his students to several Cooley Landing planning meetings to contribute their ideas. As a result, a solar photovoltaic system is now a part of the building design.

As Cooley Landing implementation continues Job Train has the potential to continue to collaborate in these ways:

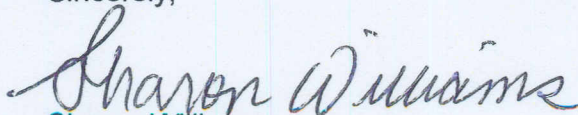
- High quality trained workers who are graduates of our programs could provide construction services to develop the Cooley Landing project (consistent with all applicable competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements).
- Training programs could be conducted at Cooley Landing where relevant. For example, Mr. Huggett is interested in providing training for his students at Cooley Landing during the process of installing solar systems there.

We support the Strategic Growth Council and SB 732 objectives to improve air and water quality, protect natural resources and agricultural lands, increase the availability of affordable housing, improve infrastructure systems, promote public health, and assist state and local entities in the planning of sustainable communities and meet AB 32 goals. We also support the State Planning Priorities:

- promote infill development and invest in existing communities,
- protect, preserve and enhance environmental, agricultural and recreational resources, and
- encourage location and resource efficient new development.

You can reach me at swilliams@jobtrainworks.org or (650) 330-6429 for more information.

Sincerely,


Sharon Williams
Executive Director



PO Box 50784
East Palo Alto
California 94303
Phone / Fax
650.324.2769
collectiveroots.org

October 15, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Cooley Landing project offers a tremendous opportunity to increase severely limited open space access to a community facing serious challenges. I write to encourage you to consider funding this important effort.

The mission of Collective Roots, the East Palo Alto based nonprofit I work for, is to educate and engage youth and communities in food system change through sustainable programs that impact health, education, and the environment. Collective Roots achieves its mission through the innovative integration and implementation of two key program areas: garden-based education and food system change. We rely on extensive collaboration and partnership to enable all aspects of our work, and we receive the support of hundreds of volunteers in order to achieve our goals and objectives. Please see our website at www.collectiveroots.org for more details about our programs.

Collective Roots can support the Cooley Landing restoration and environmental education efforts through these practical contributions:

- Providing equipment for trash pickup or planting, e.g. gloves, shovels, bags, etc.
- Organizing at least one volunteer event, including supplementing the City's recruitment efforts, giving an environmental education presentation at the beginning of the event, liability insurance, documentation of results, and supervision of volunteers
- Training others in East Palo Alto to organize their own volunteer events in the future
- Potentially growing native plants in our greenhouse

We estimate that a group of two coordinators with 50-100 volunteers should be able to plant an acre at a half-day event. We organize monthly volunteer work days at our East Palo Alto Charter School site and could schedule one of these at Cooley Landing during the fall, optimal planting season for native plants in our climate zone.

You can reach me at kris@collectiveroots.org or 650-324-2769 for more information.

Sincerely,

Kris Jensen
Executive Director

Garden-based Learning • Youth Leadership • Food System Change • Environmental Action



Exhibit 4: Project Letters

RAVENSWOOD SHORES BUSINESS DISTRICT, LLC
P.O. Box 90162
Palo Alto, CA 94303
650-323-9070

October 15, 2010

Dear Grant Review Committee:

The Cooley Landing project offers a tremendous opportunity to increase severely limited open space access to a community facing serious challenges. Please consider funding this important effort.

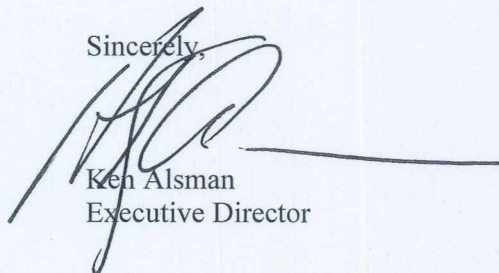
The Ravenswood Shores Business District, LLC, is a private association of property owners in the Ravenswood Area that is committed to assisting the City achieve our common goal of successfully redeveloping the area. We have already contributed over \$300,000 in funds for planning and predevelopment studies toward this effort. RSBD leadership has actively expressed our strong support for Cooley Landing improvements essential to the future of the Ravenswood Urban Revitalization Plans and the economic development of the Ravenswood Industrial Area.

The neighborhood surrounding Cooley Landing has historically been an industrial area with contamination, auto wrecking yards, and crime. Over the years, our District has worked with the City to transition the area to a revitalizing brownfields area. Together we have combated crime, cleaned up contamination, revitalized the main street Bay Road, and brought in attractive thriving new businesses and non-profit organizations that provide useful community services. New high density mixed use infill development projects are now entitled in this area.

Though we have already accomplished a great deal, much work remains to be done. Cooley Landing would be the crowning jewel at the end of Bay Road that would demonstrate that this neighborhood is turning a corner and becoming the attractive, thriving District that we are all working toward. It would provide a lovely spot for new residents and workers to have a picnic lunch, take a walking break, learn about nature and history, or hold meetings. It would bring a sense of identity and beauty to this community. We therefore support the Cooley Landing park project.

You can reach me at kenalsman@aol.com or 650-323-9070 for more information.

Sincerely,



Ken Alsman
Executive Director



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex
9500 Thornton Avenue
Newark, California 94560



October 12, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

Cooley Landing is a former County dump with disturbed upland area adjacent to managed areas of the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. This part of the refuge (Faber-Laumeister tract) is home to one of the highest concentrations of federally listed endangered California clapper rail populations in the Bay area. Part of the San Francisco Bay Trail is located at the border between this wetland habitat and the adjacent industrial and residential neighborhoods of East Palo Alto. Portions of the Bay Trail that border this tract connect directly to Cooley Landing, so Cooley Landing's goals will complement our efforts very well.

Unfortunately, the portion of Cooley Landing directly adjacent to the Refuge contains wetlands with large piles of concrete debris that holds potential habitat for predators of the clapper rails and other valuable species. It also contains toxic tar dumped on the surface mixed with vegetation of non-native invasive weeds. The Faber-Laumeister tract does have an internal levee that has historically been used for biking, hiking, fishing, and also illegal dumping throughout. With the proposed restoration of Cooley Landing, this would provide another controlled access point for the local community to engage in learning about the habitat values of the area, which could potentially reduce the use of the internal levee of the Faber-Laumeister tract and impacts to the endangered species.

The Refuge has therefore already contributed the following to the Cooley Landing Project:

Environmental education: The City has hosted six community walking tours of Cooley Landing to involve residents in the planning and design of the future Cooley Landing park in 2003, 2004, and 2009. At least two refuge staff or volunteers have provided environmental education programs at each tour. These included providing bird scopes and binoculars, microscopes to look at mud creatures from the on-site mud, field guides, and interpretation. Community residents expressed surprise and excitement to discover the amazing natural wonders present. In addition, two Refuge experienced environmental educators have provided input on the interpretive message development process. Finally, two Refuge staff has hosted an East Palo Alto community tour of the Refuge Alviso Environmental Education Center and the restoration of the surrounding landscape using native grasses and forbs.

Youth Job creation: The refuge hired ten local youth (five from East Palo Alto) this summer through the AmeriCorps program. These youth received training about baylands ecology and will help implement an environmental education program for this community.

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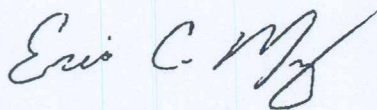
With the knowledge and experience we will provide, these local youth will become potential future contributors for environmental education at Cooley Landing.

Technical assistance: Refuge ornithologist, ecologist, biologists and others have surveyed the site and contributed information about existing conditions. At least five Refuge staff have reviewed draft versions of the park design and made recommendations for restoration activities to enhance existing habitat and recommendations for mitigation of impacts. These include reducing potential for raptor perches, directional lighting that avoids marsh impacts, trail buffers. The landscape architect and the City have agreed to incorporate our recommendations into the design plan. We have also recommended practices during construction to minimize habitat impacts, such as controlling timing and noise levels. Our staff have also given information to the City about the Endangered Species Act consultation process and provided results from our regular bird surveys to the regulatory staff of Fish and Wildlife Service to inform the permitting process for this project. Our ecologist has provided a suggested plant palette to the City's landscape architect. Refuge staff and volunteers have provided education programs to City staff about the Refuge native plant garden, wetland ecology 101, birds and other wetland creatures.

Coordination with larger context of restoration and education efforts: Our refuge is starting a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) process. The CCP (which is a NEPA process) is the US Fish and Wildlife Service's way of making a 15 year management plan for each Refuge, which are encouraged to be complete by 2012. Some of our goals in this process include improving clapper rail habitat as well as enhancing public access and awareness about the ecology of the habitat. We hosted a site visit for four City departments about this effort. In addition, north of Cooley Landing, the Refuge has restored a former salt pond (SF-2) and improving trail access to the public. Refuge staff has provided information about these processes to City staff and community residents to ensure that the Cooley Landing process coordinates well with the larger context of related efforts.

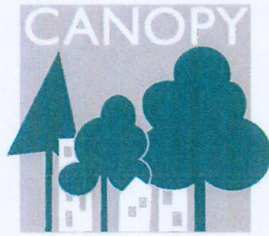
The Refuge is very committed to continue support for Cooley Landing and the efforts of providing the local community a place to enjoy the Bay. Please feel free to contact me at (510)792-0222 or Kimby Wells, Environmental Educator, at 408-262-5513x101 (kimby_wells@fws.gov).

Sincerely,



Eric Mruz, Manager
Don Edwards SF Bay NWR

Exhibit 4: Project Letters



Staff

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Program Director
Elliott Wright
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Jane Stocklin
Lauren Bonar Swezey
Lanie Wheeler

CANOPY is a Palo Alto based nonprofit advocate for the urban forest and works to educate, inspire and engage the community as stewards of young and mature trees.

September 30, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

Re: Canopy Support for the City of East Palo Alto Cooley Landing grant application

Canopy is a Palo Alto-based non-profit advocate for the urban forest and works to educate, inspire, and engage the community as stewards of young and mature trees. We support the Cooley Landing project's efforts to restore an impaired site and to promote environmental education.

Canopy has extensive experience with urban greening projects. In particular Canopy's East Palo Alto Tree Initiative (EPA TI) planted more than 1,200 trees in East Palo Alto since 2007 in partnership with the City of East Palo Alto and Cal Fire. This eminently successful planting (more than 98% survival rate and exceptional growth rates) resulted from our state-of-the-art design, species selection, planting specifications and subsequent tree care techniques and regimen. This project has involved several hundred community volunteers of all ages and a dozen youth through our Youth Program, a partnership with the local Job Train nonprofit that involves training and part-time employment for young adults from East Palo Alto and is designed to encourage leadership and future tree stewardship.

We make environmental education part of all our volunteer training and tree planting activities.

Canopy expects to extend these existing efforts to Cooley Landing. We have already provided the following assistance to the project:

- Pro bono certified arborist technical assistance to tag for removal trees that are diseased, dying or dead, non-native invasive species, and/or that are in an inappropriate location.
- Research about new native non-invasive species that would be appropriate to plant instead.
- Interpretation of soil testing to help determine what species of trees could be most suitable for the site.

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To Whom it May Concern

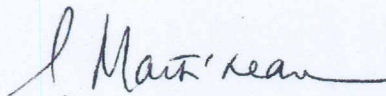
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September 30, 2010

- Survey of Heritage sized trees to comply with the City of Menlo Park's Heritage Tree Ordinance requirement for a tree disposition plan.
- Recommendations for addressing several California pepper tree growing in at a depth and location that may expose members of the public to contaminated soil.

Cooley Landing is an amazing opportunity to continue our work in a place that will attract and enlighten so many community residents about our precious environment. Please contact me at (650) 964-6110 ext. 1 or catherine@canopy.org and I would be happy to share more about our excitement to continue our East Palo Alto Tree Initiative at Cooley Landing,

Sincerely,



Catherine Martineau
Executive Director

Exhibit 4: Project Letters



October 15, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

I urge you to support East Palo Alto's Cooley Landing project. It will greatly benefit the environment and raise awareness of environmental issues in an underserved community.

The San Francisquito Watershed Project, under our parent organization Acterra, stands ready to support the Cooley Landing project in the following ways:

1. Providing equipment for trash pickup or planting, e.g. gloves, shovels
2. Assisting in at least one volunteer event, including supplementing the City's recruitment efforts, giving an environmental education presentation at the beginning of the event, and supervision of volunteers
3. Training others in East Palo Alto to organize their own volunteer events in the future
4. Technical assistance about both the types of plants and the methods and locations of placements that would promote restoration of habitat

Please contact me at (650) 962-9876 x310 or Arriet@acterra.org and I would be happy to talk more about the value of the Cooley Landing project to our community and potential roles for Acterra in the restoration and environmental education at this important site.

Sincerely,

Arnie Thompson
Director, Watershed Project

October 15, 2010

Dear Sir or Madam:

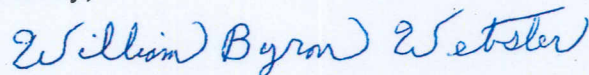
I am writing to support the Cooley Landing project for East Palo Alto. The Jane Leech Memorial Fund Advisory Committee is a grassroots community-based organization dedicated to conserving the natural environment of East Palo Alto and promoting environmental education and stewardship. This Committee is a project of the East Palo Alto Community Alliance and Neighborhood Development Organization (EPA CAN DO). East Palo Alto has a fragile environment that is subject to damage from vandalism, littering, and neglect. Jane Leech loved nature and shared her love with others of all ages. Through promoting restoration of impaired habitat and environmental education, we will change the culture of the East Palo Alto community so that all of us will cherish and protect these natural gifts.

In Jane Leech's spirit, we have already contributed support in the following forms:

- Worked with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to salvage and store portions of a former dredge that burned in March 2008 in the hope that these can become part of a future display that will provide education to local youth interested in future science and engineering careers
- Posted 300 flyers and sent emails to hundreds of community residents for outreach to local community residents to encourage meaningful involvement in the Cooley Landing planning process
- Contributed input about the design and planning process, including the suggestion of a dredge display at the former dredge site, an idea that the City's landscape architect rendered and presented at a recent community meeting
- Reached out to potential community-based partners who also share a commitment to habitat restoration and environmental education
- Set up a children's table with environmental education materials from the City and the Fish and Wildlife Service at two recent community planning meetings

We will continue to provide assistance as the project moves forward in honor of our beloved friend and colleague Jane Leech. Please feel free to contact me at 650-322-9725 with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,



William Byron Webster, Chair
Jane Leech Memorial Fund Advisory Committee
(650) 322-9725
wbw@stanford.edu

:wbw